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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 9123
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UNCLAS SAO PAULO 000109

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [OPRC](#) [OIIP](#) [ETRD](#) [BR](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WESTERN HEMISPHERE: CRISIS BETWEEN COLOMBIA
AND ECUADOR; SAO PAULO

11. "What Is Expected From Brazil"

Center-right national circulation daily O Estado de S. Paulo lead editorial maintained (3/5): "The Colombian invasion in Ecuador cannot be characterized as a casual and unmotivated act of aggression. The governments of Ecuador and Venezuela have clearly provided protection to a gang of cocaine traffickers and kidnappers that want to be recognized as an ideological guerrilla that fights a political regime that, by the way, is democratic. If the nations of the region decide to isolate Colombia politically and economically, they will be giving invaluable help to the enemies of democracy not only in that nation but also on the continent.... The fact is the FARC have been using Ecuadorian and Venezuelan territories to conduct their ominous business, without any opposition of the governments of these nations.... Rafael Correa and Hugo Chavez have unconcealable sympathy vis-à-vis the FARC. They consider this terrorist group part of the geopolitical 'Bolivarian' project."

12. "Priority For The Hostages"

Liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (3/5) editorialized: "Contrary to what President Hugo Chavez suggested, the death of Raul Reyes, the number 2 in the FARC's hierarchy, should not be deplored. The rebel and his fellow comrades who were shot by the Colombian Army on Saturday ran the risk of dying violently because of the type of life they chose - for decades they had murdered, kidnapped and challenged Colombia's legitimate power. The problem is that his death hampers the release of hostages kept by the FARC.... Therefore, it is important that the political and diplomatic efforts aimed at mediating an understanding between Bogota and Quito should not ignore the hostages' situation.... Unfortunately, there are reasons to fear that Colombian President Alvaro Uribe's commitment in the hostages' release is limited.... Uribe is the legitimate representative of all Colombians and the only one authorized to make decisions on behalf of his nation. All negotiations involving the hostages must be approved by Bogota. It is necessary, however, that the Colombian president be convinced that the hostages' situation deserves maximum priority."

13. "Suspect Silence"

Columnist Clovis Rossi opined in liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (3/5): "Rafael Correa is demanding very clear apologies from Colombia to give up his decision of breaking relations with his neighbor. It is fair. But it is also fair that Correa apologizes to the Colombians - more than the Colombian government - for having permitted the 'tour' of FARC hostages in Ecuador.... The fact that the Colombian Army invaded

Ecuadorian territory is condemnable, but is it acceptable that the FARC adopts the same behavior?.... An armed fight against a legitimate government is intolerable. To support it means to support all human rights violations carried out by the FARC's delinquents.... Inhuman treatment given to prisoners by right wing dictatorships is, of course, unacceptable. But is it OK when carried out by leftist fellows? Abu Ghraib is condemnable, but is incarceration in the jungle, with similar tortures, permitted?"

14. "New Frontier"

Columnist Melchiades Filho commented in liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (3/5): "With the attack, the Colombian president ensures more US arms and money, and maybe the possibility to prolong his term. On the other hand, if they were really interested in making peace, the FARC would not release the hostages little by little. They wouldn't either demand as a precondition the total demilitarization of the Colombian region where they conduct their business.... Chavez is looking for a target.... The violation of national sovereignty has only legitimated Rafael Correa's discourse that Ecuador should unite and mobilize its neighbors against imperialistic hostility. And the US, which were facing tough criticism due to a series of failures in fighting drug trafficking, now has a new excuse to maintain a base in Colombia: to protect it from insane Bolivarians."
White